

New Hampshire Population Projections State and Counties Fall 2013

Summary

The New Hampshire Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) has been preparing projections or forecasts of future population for the state and its political subdivisions since 1964. The projections are used by a wide variety of government agencies and private interests to guide public policy, gauge market potential and estimate future target populations. The projections can be applied directly and unaltered to guide public or private endeavors. The projections can also serve as a *beginning*, or point of departure, in developing further projection efforts or refining existing ones.

These projections are the first iteration based on the 2010 U.S. Census. The last OEP projections were published in November, 2006. The two sets of projections, at the state and county level, combine census data with birth and death data from the NH Department of State/Division of Vital Records Administration and other sources. These data are then used to develop survival and fertility rates and age-specific migration rates. The births and deaths span the decade and allow rates to be specific to New Hampshire. It is important to keep in mind that state and county projections (with age detail) are the result of the projection model. Once these numbers are developed, municipal projections are established and published separately.

The preparation of the projections is the result of the combined efforts of our consultant, Robert Scardamalia of RLS Demographics, and a committee comprised of the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), Dennis Delay from the Center for Public Policy and Russ Thibeault of Applied Economic Research. Without their counsel and hard work, these projections would not have been possible. The RPCs and OEP provided funding to RLS Demographics to produce the projections at the state and county level, using the same model that was built for the projections in the previous decade.

As background, the projections are processed by a standard demographic, cohort-component method. This technique breaks the population into 36 age/gender cohorts. Each cohort has its own survival rate and migration rate. Fertility rates are also applied on an age-specific basis. The technique is processed by the model referenced above, programmed by RLS Demographics. The complete report is attached to this summary.

A Few Words on Projections

Population projections are not predictions. The projection process attempts to identify probable assumptions and then extend those assumptions into the future, via a mathematical technique. By themselves, projections can serve as a general guide to likely future population trends. The projections can also serve as a *beginning* to alternative projection efforts. Data users are also encouraged to use OEP's projections to evaluate other projection efforts. While these projections extend out to 2040, it is important to keep in mind that the longer the forecast span, the greater the chance for errors. As in previous decades, OEP will revisit these projections during this decade and adjust the forecast depending on any changes in trends.

Municipal Projections

Municipal level projections are direct products of the projections developed at the state and county levels. For many years, OEP has adhered to a geographic step-down protocol, whereby larger geographies are projected first and the lower geographies are projected in conformance with the respective “parent” geographic area.

In specific terms, this means that OEP projects the 10 counties, then the respective (within counties) municipalities. The sum of the 10 counties is the state total. Population totals for each lower geography must agree with the appropriate higher geography. For more information on the municipal projections, please see the separate report on OEP’s website.

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